

# ***Five Activities That Could Injure The Back***

## **Lifting/Lowering:**

Lifting is to raise from a lower to a higher level. The range of a lift can be from the ground to as high as you can reach your hands.

Lowering is the opposite activity from lifting.

## **Pushing/Pulling:**

Pushing is to press against with force in order to move the object. The opposite is to pull.

## **Twisting:**

As applied to lifting is the act of moving the upper body to one side or the other while the lower body remains in a relatively fixed position. *(Twisting can take place while the entire body is in a state of motion)*

## **Carrying:**

Having an object in ones grasp or attached while in the act of moving. The weight of the object becomes a part of the total weight of the person doing the work.

## **Holding:**

Having an object in ones grasp while in a static position

# ***DANGER! If I do this I could hurt my back!***

**Anytime you find yourself doing one of the following, you could injure you back**

***Heavy lifting* ... especially repetitive *lifting* over a long period of time.**

***Twisting at the waist while lifting* ... using a shovel or moving objects from one location to another while the feet remain in one position for example.**

***Reaching and lifting* ... over your head, *across* a table, or from the back of a truck or trunk of car.**

***Lifting or carrying* objects that have an odd *shape* or are *awkward* ... carrying a typewriter.**

***Working with poor body posture or in uncomfortable positions* ... tasks that require you to bend over for long periods of time... kneeling... gardening... sorting... packing...**

***Standing or sitting too long in one position* ... Sitting can be very hard on the lower back.**

***Slips and falls* ... It is possible to suffer serious back injury from slipping on wet floors or ice or the result of a trip and fall.**

## **Avoid Lifting and Bending Whenever Possible**

***Place object off the floor.*** Whenever you know that you or someone else will be lifting an object later, put it down on a table or other ***elevated*** surface instead of on the floor.

***Lower / raise shelves.*** Store objects between knuckle and shoulder height. The heaviest objects should be stored at waist level.

**Follow these steps when lifting:**

- 1) Take a balanced stance with your feet about shoulder-width apart. (It is OK to put one foot behind the object and the other next to it.)
- 2) Squat down, but keep your heels off the floor (on the balls of your feet). Get as close as you can to the object.
- 3) Use your palms and not just your fingers to get a secure grip on the object. Make sure that this grip will hold and you will not have to switch your grip later.
- 4) Lift slowly (without jerking) using your leg, abdominal, and buttock muscles while keeping the load as close as possible to you.
- 5) Once you are standing “do not twist” when you change directions. Point your feet in the direction you want to go and then turn your whole body. Do not twist with the object while you are walking.
- 6) To lower the load or place the object, use these same guidelines in reverse.